

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 IO-03 DPW-01 AID-10 NSC-10 NSCE-00

PM-03 DODE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 L-02

PRS-01 RSR-01 /070 W

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R 210430Z AG 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6207

USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 15064

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT MILI VS

SUBJECT: MR3 SITREP - AUGUST 20, 1973

FOLLOWING SENT SAIGON AUG 20 INFO USDAO SAIGON USSAG NKP THAILAND
REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION

QUOTE

BIEN HOA 418

1. MR 3 G2 REPORTS 45 MILITARY CLASHES DURING THE 72 HOUR PERIOD
ENDING 0800 AUGUST 20. SIXTEEN OF THESE WERE IN THE FIRST 24 HOUR
PERIOD, 14 IN THE SECOND, AND 15 THE LAST 24 HOURS. THERE WERE 11
GROUND CONTACTS, 11 ATTACKS BY FIRE (NONE OVER 20 ROUNDS), TWO CO-
ORDINATED GROUND ATTACK/ATTACK BY FIRE, 12 MINING/GRENADE DETONA-
TIONS (THREE CIVILIAN), TWO LUMBER TRUCK HIJACKINGS (NEAR PHU GIAO,
BINH DUONG PROVINCE), SIX SMALL ARMS HARASSMENTS, AND ONE SAPPER
ATTEMPT (AT QUYET TAM OUTPOST, BINH DUONG PROVINCE). INCIDENTS IN THE

REGION BY PROVINCE WERE BINH DUONG ELEVEN, HAU NGHIA EIGHT, LONG
KHANH SEVEN, FIVE EACH IN BINH LONG AND PHUOC LONG, GIA DINH FOUR,
BINH TUY TWO, AND ONE EACH IN TAY NINH, PHUOC TUY AND LONG AN.
REPORTED GVN LOSSES WERE 12 KILLED (TWO CIVILIAN), 28 WOUNDED
(SEVEN CIVILAIN), ONE MIA, THREE M-16'S DAMAGE TO A TILLING MACHINE
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AND JEEP. COMMUNIST LOSSES FOR THE SAME PERIOD WERE 13 KIA, THREE CIA/WIA, AND SOME WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT. TWO VC/NA RALLIED TO THE GVN IN HAU NGHIA.

2. IN WEEK ENDING 0800 MONDAY AUGUST 20 (NEW WEEKLY REPORTION PERIOD), WAR SLACKED OFF SOMEWHAT IN MR 3, WITH 114 INCIDENTS REPORTED COMAPRED WITH 153 IN WEEK ENDING 0800 FIRDAY AUGUST 10 (OLD WEEKLY REPORTING PERIOD). OF THESE INCIDENTS 33 WERE GROUND ATTACKS, 32 ATTACKS BY FIRE (TWO MAJOR), SIX COMBINED ATTACKS BY FIRE AND ON THE GROUND, NINE SMALL ARMS HARRASSMENTS, TWO TERROR-IST ATTEMPTS, TWO SAPPER ATTEMPTS, ONE ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIREING, TWO HIJACKINGS, AND 27 MININGS (SIX CIVILIAN). BINH DUONG HAD 26 INCIDENTS, HAU NGHIA 21, LONG KHANH 12, LONG AN 11, PHUOC LONG AND GIA DINH TEN EACH, BINH LONG AND BIEN HOA SEVEN EACH, TAY NINH SIX, BINH TUY THREE, AND PHUOC TUY ONE. GVN LOST 26 KILLED (NINE CIVILIANS), 99 WOUNDED (14 CIVILIANS), ONE MISSING; AND REPORTED THAT COMMUNISTS LOST 110 KILLED, 12 CAPTURED, FOUR SUSPECTS ARRESTED, AND THREE RALLIERS.

3. IN REGULAR MONDAY MORNING MR 3 WEEKLY BRIEFING, IT WAS REPORTED THAT THERE WERE 116 INCIDENTS IN WEEK ENDING 0800 SUNDAY AUGUST 19, COMPARED TO 136 PREVIOUS WEEK. (DIFFERENT REPORTING PERIOD THAN OURS IN PARA 2 ABOVE). GVN/COMMUNIST CASUALTY RATIO WAS ABOUT 1/6; THERE WERE 96 COMMUNISTS KIA, 11 CAPTURED (MOSTLY NVA) AND THREE RALLIERS. G-2 REPORTED HE HAS INFORMATION THAT COMMUNISTS WILL TRY TO SABOTAGE UPPER HOUSE ELECTION THROUGH SHELLING AND INTERDICTING OF SELECT HIGHWAYS TO PREVENT PEOPLE FROM VOTING, AND USING OTHER SPECIAL METHODS INCLUDING PICKING UP REGISTRATION CARDS.

4. BEN LUC DISTRICT, LONG AN PROVINCE, HAS BEEN QUIET OVER WEEKEND AFTER HEAVY FIGHTING AUGUST 16-17. ON AUGUST 17 MR 3 G-2 LTC BINH TOLD DAO/RLO THAT BEN LUC CLASHES INVOLVED COMMUNIST LOCAL FORCE K.5 BATTALION. ACCORDING TO POWS, K.5 WAS MOVING TOWARD PARROT'S BEAK AREA OF CAMBODIA FOR REFITTING AND RETRAINING, BUT BINH DOUBTED THIS AND SPECULATED RATHER THAN K.5 WOULD JOIN WITH K.7 IN HARRASSMENT OF DUC HOA DISTRICT SEAT, HAU NGHIA PROMGNCE, IN CONNECTION WITH AUGUST 26 UPPER HOUSE ELECTIONS. HE SAID DOCUMENTS CAPTURED DURING BEN LUC ENGAGEMENT CONTAINED ORDERS FOR LONG AN LOCAL FORCE BATTALIONS TO INITIATE SMALL UNIT ATTACKS AT KEY POINTS, SUCH AS CITIES, TOWNS, AND LOCS, FROM JULY 20 TO AUGUST 15. (COMMENT: IT IS NOT UNUSUAL FOR COMMUNIST UNITS TO FALL BEHIND SCHEDULE ESTABLISHED IN ORDERS FROM HIGHER HEADQUARTERS. END COMMENT)

5. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT SITUATION HAS IMPROVED ALONG INTER-CONFIDENTIAL

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PROVINCIAL ROUTE 23 BETWEEN DAT DO AND XUYEN MOC DISTRICT TOWNS IN PHUOC TUY PROVINCE. DAO/RLO OVERFLEW ROAD AUGUST 16 AND SAW LITTLE OR NO TRAFFIC ALONG IT, BUT ALSO NO SIGN OF MILITARY ACTIVITY. MR3 G-2 TOLD DAO/RLO AUGUST 17 THAT TOAD WAS OPEN AND QUIET. PHUOC TUY SECTOR TOLD RRO ROAD WAS OPEN, BUT IN FACT ITS USE SEEMS STILL TO BE LIMITED, AND WE DO NOT KNOWHOW HEAVILY ARMED AN ARVN

UNIT MUST BE TO USE THE ROAD.

6. TAYNINH PROVINCE CHIEF COL. THIEN TOLD RRO THAT COMMUNISTS HAVE NOW GOT BA DEN MOUNTAIN RINGED WITH SA-7 ANTI-AIRCRAFT MISSILES, MAKING HELICOPTER RESUPPLY OF MOUNTAINTOP COMMUNICATIONS BASE VERY DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE. MEANWHILE, CONGEN LOCAL EMPLOYEES PICKED UP COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA LEAFLETS IN DOWNTOWN TAY NINH MORNING AUGUST 20, FIRST TIME COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA HAD APPEARED THERE

SINCE JANUARY CEASE-FIRE. LEAFLETS CRITICIZED HEAVY TAXES AND RISING PRICES, CALLED ON SOLDIERS TO BE UNITED WITH THE PEOPLE, AND OPPOSED A PLANNED CHANGE FROM AN OLD TO A NEW MARKET.

7. ITEM REPORTING VIEWS OF LONG AN PROVINCE BANKER (SEE OUR AUGUST 17 SITREP, PARA 7), IS NOT TO BE CONSTRUED AS REFLECTIVE OF WIDESPREAD FEELING IN THIS OR ANY OTHER PROVINCE IN MR 3. HIS PREDICTION THAT GVN WILL COLLAPSE IN 3 MONTHS IS CONTRARY TO FACTS AS WE KNOW THEM. PEOPLE IN MR 3 MAY BE UNHAPPY ABOUT PRICES AND INFLATION BUT ARE NOT ABOUT TO TURN TO COMMUNISTS FOR SOLUTION OF PROBLEM. SIGNED WALKINSHAW
UNQUOTE MARTIN

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